

JC Community Garden Stories

Riverview Community Garden

334 Ogden Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07307

Riverview Community Garden (RCG) is a 501(c)(3)-pending organization located in Jersey City, New Jersey, under the backdrop of a sweeping view from the top of the Palisades cliff over Hoboken, the Hudson River, and Manhattan. RCG was once an abandoned, overgrown city lot until 1995, when two local residents, Greg Bricky and Kathy Packard applied for and received a grant to create a fenced community garden. It has been an integral part of the Jersey City Heights community ever since.

RCG is an open-plan, fenced community garden with about thirty plots including a Children's Learning Garden and communal Peace Garden edged with trees and shrubs. More than thirty resident gardeners tend individual and communal plots of vegetables and flowers. The Garden not only enhances the beauty of the park, but cultivates a spirit of community and helps people reconnect with the Earth. RCG is committed to providing gardening opportunities and activities to citizens of all ages and incomes, hosting educational programs, and establishing collaborative partnerships with other community organizations.

For the 2014 season, the RCG's theme is "Beautification of the Heights!" which is a series of projects designed to create a more beautiful community in the Jersey City Heights. Initiatives include:

- A **Guerilla Gardening Brigade** to beautify neglected, barren, or overgrown spaces.
- **Art in the Garden** will create a bridge between the garden and the newly-zoned Riverview Arts District (RAD) by hosting events that showcase both gardening and art.
- In the **Peace Garden**, veggies and herbs will be grown using experimental techniques, while sharing the harvest with those who visit the garden and those in need.
- The **Children's Learning Garden** will share the joy of gardening and show children where their food comes from, while teaching them healthy eating habits.
- **Project Walkway** will repave walkways in the garden with bricks and stone.
- **Seeding the Heart: Meditation Circle with LaureG**, will feature guided meditation in the garden.
- The **Community Composting Program** will start off with a crowd-sourced online fundraising campaign to rebuild a cedar tree bin compost system and collect compost materials from the community during. The compost will be used in the garden and to those in the community who need it. We will have a Community Composting Day with a workshop and instructions on how everyone in the community can take part in composting.



Brunswick Community Garden

176 Brunswick Street,
Jersey City, NJ 07302

The Brunswick Community Garden in Jersey City was established in 1999. It is home to flower beds, gardening plots for growing produce, and common areas with fruit trees that can be enjoyed by the public. The individuals who tend to the garden plant a variety of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Last year, one gardener was planting flowers in order to extract dyes from the plants.

The Brunswick Community Garden not only grows plants for creative uses, but actively re-uses discarded food waste. With three rotating composting bins, we are able to replenish our garden while keeping nutrient-rich waste out of landfills. The opening meeting for the 2014 growing season was already held, and monthly clean-up dates are being set. The official open season for the garden is May 1 through October 1.

Last year's crop at Brunswick Community Garden included:

- strawberries
- tomatoes
- herbs
- root vegetables
- peppers
- leafy greens and more!
- a peach tree
- 2 fig trees
- irises
- roses
- sunflowers



Holland Tunnel Garden Association

60 River Drive South
Jersey City, NJ 07310

The Holland Tunnel Garden Association (HTGA) was founded approximately ten years ago, known then as the Hudson River Garden. In 2012, the name was changed to HTGA to better reflect its location within Jersey City and give a focus to the urban challenges to sustainable gardening.

The HTGA site is more than 7,000 sq. ft., bisected by a sidewalk connecting the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway to River Drive South. The ornamental garden is a series of perennial beds planted with holly, roses, iris, herbs and flowers. It suffered flooding during Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, when about a foot of water covered the lot. Surprisingly, many of the shrubs and flowers survived.

HTGA volunteers plant, maintain, weed, water, fertilize, and beautify the park throughout the year. It is the goal of the Association to educate passersby and neighbors about the benefits of open space, gardening, and the environment. The Association also works to provide age-appropriate activities for neighborhood children.

The HTGA is actively planning children's activities and events for the 2014 season. This year the Association is implementing a new program focused on Bees, Gardeners Adding Pollinators, or BeeGAP, to increase pollinators like honeybees, native bees, butterflies and birds to promote the overall health of the local ecosystem.



UMMI

91-93 Harrison Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07304

UMMI's garden broke ground April 2, 2012. In our first year we cleared the ground of debris and covered it with cardboard and mulch. The garden started with about eight families or plot managers, and grew a crop of tomatoes, spinach, lettuce, and chili peppers. All who came to and through the garden were given tours and samplings from the garden. In its first year, UMMI's Garden was awarded "Best Start-Up Garden!"

Last year (2013), the garden saw a lot more visitors and gained a few more garden family members. UMMI became known as the artist garden because of murals on the garden's walls, artists' demonstrations of visual and spoken word artistry, and a six week workshop on writing, hosted at the garden, free of charge. At least once a month, celebrations were hosted at the garden to honor UMMI's caretakers, and garden vegetables were used to feed the guests and community on such occasions.

Last year's crop harvest included:

- zucchini and other squash varieties,
- pumpkin
- strawberries
- okra
- watermelon
- thyme
- basil
- oregano
- tomatoes
- lettuce, and
- chili peppers

A member or two attempted to grow corn, but was not successful. We did have a healthy cotton plant that grew well, but didn't open. In 2014, we're hoping to be successful with these new crops, and any other plants our gardeners are willing to cultivate.



Living Village Community Garden

612-616 Communipaw Avenue,
Jersey City, NJ 07304

The Living Village Community Garden was initiated in July, 2013 with a strong and dedicated team of community members. The LVCG team has been engaging community members of all ages in gardening events and other happenings. One volunteer has built a children's plot, in effect creating a space for our youth to play and grow fruits, vegetables and herbs.

A notable experience for our garden was participating in Jersey City's 2013 Artist Studio Tour. At this event, we featured the work of over a dozen local artists and musicians, and had a local filmmaker show several short films about JC wildlife. The Living Village Community Garden has partnered with the owner of the adjacent building to have local artists paint murals on the brick wall that extends the length of the garden.

Living Village Community Garden officially opened its 2014 season on April 12th, with a volunteer clean up day. The Garden will be open every day, from dusk until dawn and volunteers will lend a hand as needed, and as they are available.



Ogden's End Community Garden

11 Cuneo Place
Jersey City, NJ 07307

Ogden's End was originally a garage that was taken down and turned into an asphalt lot with an area of about 4,000 square feet. The garden is envisioned as a place for community outreach and education on gardening and sustainable living. Ogden's End has space for flowers, vegetables, fruits, saplings, a pop-up greenhouse, composting, a sitting area, a storage and loading area, and a dozen raised garden beds.

Ogden's End is a space that will be open to members of the public for planting and general enjoyment, with the goal of creating a community of people who share common interests in horticulture, ecology, and community beautification. Sapling trees for the community can be grown and distributed here, and may also provide a source of revenue for the garden.

Gardens are not just places of growth, but places of renewal. The Ogden's End garden will utilize composting to turn discarded food waste into food for the plants. Water barrels to capture rain water can ensure that there is always a sustainable way to keep the Garden irrigated. Storage for tools and equipment will be located on-site, so people will always be able to tend to their plots.

Community outreach is the ultimate goal of Ogden's End Garden. Ideally, the Garden will become a place for local school's to educate students about gardening and sustainable living. Workshops for adult members of the community will also be a crucial function of the Garden. By providing outreach to local groups, we will be turning this once-vacant lot into a place of gathering, learning, sharing, and enjoyment.



Urban Action Community Garden

530 Ocean Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07305

In the autumn of 2011, in the midst of a thriving urban landscape, a vacant Jersey City lot covered in rubble and bottles was reborn as a community garden lead by a few committed gardeners dedicated to the possibility of growing organic food as a community. Urban Action Community Garden is a non-profit that is run by a dedicated staff of volunteers. With the generous support of our members and neighbors, wholesome nutritional food and flowering plants are being grown organically and successfully in a once-barren city lot.

The Urban Action Community Garden features eight rain barrels and three compost bins to provide nourishment for the plants being grown in the garden. The Garden serves as a location for free workshops on container gardening, and informally education about gardening in general. The Jersey City Mayor's Office hired an artist to paint a mural on the brick wall facing the garden. The theme is of the Great Migration, and it is scheduled for completion this spring.

In 2012 and 2013, the Urban Action Community Garden was named the City's Most Sustainable Garden. Since opening, the Garden has successfully grown the following fruits, vegetables, flowers, and herbs:

-tomatoes	-radishes	-onions
-peas	-pole beans	-bush beans
-carrots	-collards	-kale
-chard	-pumpkins	-summer and winter squash
-hot peppers	-melon	-eggplant
-corn	-leeks	-bell peppers
-lettuces	-spinach	-turnips
-garlic	-cucumbers	-sunflowers
-zinnias	-calendula	-cosmos
-marigolds	-peppermint	-chocolate mint
-rosemary	-thyme	-tarragon
-sage	-cilantro	-parsley
-sweet basil	-Thai basil	-oregano

